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ABSTRACT

This booklet explores the purpose and function of teacher organizations. It discusses teacher organizations as advocates functioning not only to support and protect teacher interests but also to actively seek attainment of improved curriculum and more adequate instructional materials. The booklet documents the thinking of teacher organization leaders on the future of local and state organizations in instruction and professional development. Their views were gathered through a modified Delphi technique. Results were tabulated into long- and short-range priorities. The six immediate priorities were that the local organization: (1) should participate with school boards in policy decisions on curriculum and instruction; (2) should use political action to provide the means for establishing legal and financial foundations for instructional improvement; (3) should legally share in policy decisions that establish conditions under which teachers, student teachers, teacher aides, and other instructional personnel are placed in schools; (4) should implement positive action programs ensuring fair treatment of racial and ethnic minorities; (5) should initiate and plan inservice programs in professional development of members; and (6) should program and budget a portion of fiscal and human resources to projects on instructional improvement. The seven long-range priorities are items that the local associations would like to achieve inthe next 10 to 30 years and deal generally with giving teacher organizations more influence in professional development programs, teacher certification, administrator evaluation, and student evaluation. A checklist for local organizations and a priority ranking of teacher organization role statements are given. (DMH)

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LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS EYE INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Douglas Ward

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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PREFACE

Teacher organizations are teacher advocates and function to support and protect teacher interests. They are also advocates of better teaching, improved curriculum, more adequate instructional materials; in fact, of the cause of quality education.

Parents and taxpayers sometimes think of teacher organizations as selfish collections of teachers seeking better salaries. This booklet demonstrates that teacher organizations have much broader interests than self-seeking. It documents the thinking of teacher organization leaders on the future of local and state organizations in instruction and professional development.

Space limitations required dealing only with the highest priorities identified by association leaders. There are others which some readers may want to explore in Appendix B or by reading the complete study by Douglas Ward.

As local association priority items identified by the author are dealt with, other items will surface. For this time, the research and comments included should prove helpful to most local associations.

Roy A. Edelfelt
Professional Associate

INTRODUCTION

Recently, local teacher associations in many parts of the country have been talking about programs in instruction and professional development. Many of these locals have trouble establishing clear direction and focus, because they aren't sure what they ought to be doing. Little precedent exists to help them. The balance between the role and responsibility of the local association and those of the local school district is still undetermined. How the teacher* sees himself or herself as an association member and as a school district employee will influence the direction and potency of the teacher organization movement. So it is timely to think about the various issues to be confronted in this sector of association activity.

This booklet reports impressions, opinions, and predictions from selected leaders in teacher organizations, together with the comments and observations of the writer. The views of the organizational leaders were gathered through a modified Delphi technique,** in a study designed to explore the considered opinions of currently influential leaders regarding future activities of teacher organizations. The broad question they answered was—

> What should be the role of teacher organizations in professional development and instructional improvement over the next 10 to 30 years?

*Throughout this booklet, "teacher" is defined in the restricted sense of one eligible to be a member of a teachers' collective bargaining unit. Teacher leaders cited in the study were selected staff and elected officers of teachers organizations.

**Described in Appendix A.

From their answers, a list of 29 suggested roles was developed. They were then queried further, on—

The desirability of each suggested role—whether the teacher organization should accept the role in principle.

The probable date of acceptance of each role—how soon a majority of teacher organizations in the United States are likely to accept it.

The potential impact of the role—the effect the role will have on education and/or teacher organizations.

Their reasons for supporting their particular positions.

The findings of this study provide ideas for members to discuss in determining local association programs. They are no more than ideas, for there is no one right or only good direction. The future is an unlimited series of possible events. However, an association is certain to take some direction, adopt some program, whether because of decisions or of lack of decisions. Admittedly, some directions will result from changes beyond the control of teachers and teacher organizations. But when action is planned and when it can be planned—when, that is, it is deliberate—the association can limit the uncertainty of future events and select from the multitude of alternatives.

The collective opinions of leaders with wide experience may be helpful to associations making this kind of determination. This booklet tells what some leaders think about such questions as:

What instructional and professional development roles are feasible for my local?

Are we, as leaders, perpetuating tokenism in teacher involvement in educational policy decision making?

How do economic improvement and employment security relate to concerns about the improvement of instruction?

How does a local association design a program in instruction and professional development?

How might these programs be carried out with the greatest impact?

There will be a large and increasing emphasis during the next few years on public, parent, and student involvement in instructional improvement. This booklet includes little discussion of such involvement, because it focuses on ideas for educators from within the profession. As members of teacher organizations "get their own house in order," appropriate instructional roles for students and parents will become much clearer. A futuristic study of parent and student roles in improving education and instruction would be very valuable, particularly if it emphasized how these roles interact with those of professional teacher organizations.

PRIORITIES IN INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The items leaders chose as both highly desirable and of great potential impact are discussed here as priorities, either short-range or long-range. Short-range priorities should be achieved by 1975; long-range priorities are to be carried out sometime later, perhaps within the next 10 to 30 years.

The findings that follow report, in order of the leaders' priorities, suggestions for local association participation in instruction and professional development activities. Following each statement of the leaders' opinions is further discussion and comment by the author.

SHORT-RANGE PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

PRIORITY 1: The local should participate with school boards in policy decisions on curriculum and instruction.

Leaders' opinions: Local participation in making policy decisions is the top priority, and by 1975 most locals will have achieved it through collective bargaining. The negotiations will concentrate on establishing a decision-making process rather than on determining specific instructional items. There are several reasons for assigning this item the highest priority:

Teacher input and control in instructional decision-making processes will cause effective change and teacher commitment to that change.

Teachers' interest in educational improvement will be more evident.

Teachers have the expertise and sensitivity needed to recognize possible benefits or difficulties that may arise from suggested change.

Teachers should be the acknowledged instructional experts in a school district.

Negotiating a process for curriculum and instructional decision making ensures that teachers will have something to say about policy changes and recommendations; the specific instructional decisions are made away from the bargaining table. For example, a change in the English curriculum will not be ultimately decided at the bargaining table, but the process for arriving at the decision will be. Thus curricular decisions will be made through a process mutually agreed to and adopted by the school board, administration, and local teachers association. This process will, in fact, be used in making all the professional decisions in instruction and professional development that fall within the prerogatives of professional teachers and school boards.

PRIORITY 2: The local should use political action to provide the means for establishing legal and financial foundations for instructional improvement.

Leaders' opinions: *This item will be achieved by identifying and assisting candidates who support association goals and programs. Many programs are more likely to succeed if they are operated by some agency other than the local. An instructional improvement program set up by the school board, encouraged by the local, is more likely to succeed than one the local sets up on its own. Thus, supportive representatives and officials must be elected if association programs are to succeed.*

The political power of the association should also be used to gain adequate funding for education, both to finance ongoing instructional programs and to encourage and establish experimental efforts at all levels of education.

Support for political action will increase as more educational decisions are made in the political arena. More and more, it will be the only means for achieving some association goals.

Several obstacles to effective political action must be overcome. Some members will resist association involvement in active political education programs because of prejudice. It is possible, too, that only experts in political action can lead successful association programs. Many leaders believe that the association has little or no history of political victories upon which to build a positive organizational image, and that this deficiency makes it harder to convince members of the need for and value of local political action efforts.

The growing development of political action units within locals across the United States was not explored further in this study. Evidently, however, teachers are aware, or are becoming aware, of the need for increased political effectiveness. It is important to make sure at this stage that political action is not limited to developing an improved general funding level for education (although this is most important). Locals should try to stimulate both governmental and private efforts to explore experimental curriculum development, teacher education, and professional development programs for teachers.

PRIORITY 3: The local should legally share in policy decisions that establish conditions under which teachers, student teachers, teacher aides, and other instructional personnel are placed in schools.

Leaders' opinions: *Most locals should achieve this high priority goal through collective bargaining. A share in the decisions is essential to sustaining employee rights and professional prerogatives. It can, for example, be used to prevent school boards from using nonprofessionals in situations that call for professional expertise. Student teacher rights also should be clarified and protected, primarily to prevent misuse and mismanagement of prospective teachers.*

Locals can strengthen their position on this issue by monitoring and influencing state boards of education that are developing and carrying out policies.

Recent decisions from many branches and levels of government have had great impact on the nature of local school operations. Statewide assessment programs, court rulings on local property taxes and desegregation, state school board rulings, state law on length of school days and minimum length of the school year—the list seems to grow longer daily. Decision making is shifting from the local school district to regional, state, and national governments. If local teachers associations are to maintain an

influence on the type and quality of decisions made, they must collaborate with state associations to influence these other levels of policy determination.

PRIORITY 4: The local should implement positive action programs ensuring fair treatment of racial and ethnic minorities.

Leaders' opinions: Locals should initiate positive action policies and programs as rapidly as possible. Some are involved in this now; most will be by 1975. Locals should definitely monitor school board policies and practices in this area.

Cooperation between the different levels of the association is highly desirable. The local can initiate programs, however, without waiting indefinitely to coordinate its efforts with state and national association positive action programs.

Not only this priority, but many of the others, will be attained only with great difficulty unless locals cooperate closely with state and national associations. There is a need for the political power, resources, and information that only state or national organizations are able to gather and disseminate. This need does not, however, justify the pervasive tendency of many local leaders to resolve racial and ethnic relations problems by providing only association programs that are once removed from the local level. When the local is asked to carry out some real changes in local practice, the leaders may become very defensive, saying the problem is not of their making and should be dealt with at the state or national level. Many of these problems do have roots and implications that span local school district boundaries; however, locals can take the initiative in seeking any help they need in making changes.

In some cases, state or national help may be indispensable. In a situation where the local association leaders desire to initiate a review of existing curriculum content for racial myths, for example, some members are likely to resist such review. They may have various reasons—perhaps the desire to simply continue the curriculum as presently constituted, or the feeling that to admit that change is needed is to admit guilt for teaching racial prejudice. Parent and community groups also often resist change. Many such groups have a preconceived prejudice about race that they wish to pass on to their children through the schools, or a real fear of integration.

Local leaders will be caught between conflicting groups, on the one hand, and a desire to achieve racial understanding and harmony on the other. Often they will not have had the kind of experience they need to solve the problem they face. It may be necessary to draw on others elsewhere in the state or the nation who have such experience. Furthermore, although the local leader may be able to anticipate and deal with barriers through planning and organization, the goal may be more readily achieved when he or she has the support and cooperation of such agencies as the state and national associations. These agencies can also affect specific school curriculum and textbook companies over which the local would have little or no influence.

Locals must take the initiative in a field where public leaders are in retreat. They should undertake actions to institute the employment of racially and ethnically mixed staff; ensure fair and equitable promotion opportunities for women as well as members of all racial and ethnic groups; utilize a pluralistic curriculum; and develop awareness within staff and school of the values to be gained through intercultural contact.

PRIORITY 5: The local should initiate and plan in-service programs in professional development of members.

***Leaders' opinions**: In-service professional development programs could be established through collective bargaining or other cooperative efforts with school boards. Funding should be provided out of public moneys. If association dues are used, they should be used only in urging the public to develop and maintain in-service education programs.*

The conduct of in-service programs can lead to greater teacher accountability in program implementation. It may also lead to improved assurance to the public of quality educational programs.

Locals will undoubtedly have trouble achieving agreement within their own ranks on just how to proceed with this task. In addition, some administrators and school board members may feel this activity is either a management prerogative or one that teachers must pursue and finance on their own. In fact, the school district should be responsible for funding in-service programs, but, leaders thought, locals should be responsible for planning the programs. For one thing, teachers know what education will be of practical value to them. Teachers will be more likely to commit themselves, too, to changes they themselves initiate. In too many instances they feel that much of the administrator-controlled in-service education is inappropriate and a waste of time.

PRIORITY 6: The local should program and budget a portion of fiscal and human resources to projects on instructional improvement.

***Leaders' opinions**: The amount set aside for these purposes varies greatly, but the proportion of budget allocated should generally be between 10 and 30 percent of resources available. An emerging local (one that is in the initial or beginning stages of legal mandatory collective bargaining) may have pressures on its staff and budget that preclude large-scale involvement in instruction and professional development priorities. As the local matures and institutionalizes its base, it can allocate greater amounts of resources to instruction efforts.*

The role of the local is primarily to influence others—such as school boards or universities—to accept large-scale financial and planning responsibilities for improving instruction and advancing professional development of teachers. Local school district and association planning, leadership, and financing efforts are needed. The problem often seems to be to clarify what should be done and how it can best be done. Associations need to allocate resources to improve instruction in order to—

Balance vigorous political action programs
Provide needed professional growth to members and staff
Influence the way money is allocated for school district programs.

There was a great discrepancy between the finances and the priorities leaders assigned to instruction and professional development. They said such programs should have a high priority, but they don't mean a high *funding* priority. In other words, many leaders said instruction and professional development were highly important activities for the association, but even those who were strongly committed to action in this area were reluctant to allocate funds for it.

One might speculate on possible reasons for this apparent discrepancy:

Programs are hard to define, of doubtful measurable return, and there is very little clarity on role for the local association.

It is politically good to be supportive of instruction and professional development, but the realistic budgeting of moneys to improving salaries and other important association work makes it difficult to say large sums should be spent on it.

Programs tend to be "the frosting on the cake," and the bargaining of "bread and butter" issues is where the money should go.

Much of the base for teacher input to decision making is established early in the collective bargaining process. Leaders should be sure to include the demand for a strong teacher voice in instruction and professional development in the negotiations package.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

The leaders believe that local associations should plan ahead to achieve several additional priorities within the next 10 to 30 years. Some of the suggestions are complex and difficult to carry out, especially if some of the short-range goals have not been reached. In any case, careful planning is essential.

The leaders consider the goals explored here unattainable within the immediate future, but they think ultimate achievement is possible. These priorities are listed in order of importance—that is, of degree of desirability and extent of potential impact.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 1: The local, through participating members, should establish systems to determine policies and procedures for professional development programs.

Leaders' opinions: *Locals should influence state and local criteria for establishing professional competence. Some locals are trying to do this now, through formal tenure systems. Policy has often developed and evolved through collective bargaining.*

Other agencies influence state-level decisions; the leaders were divided on how to involve teacher organizations in decisions made beyond the local level. Some leaders favored completely independent association control of the process; others favored some form of state-association cooperative regulation.

Some members may resist the local's becoming involved in this priority because—

There may be no existing statutory base for local involvement.

Teachers have no desire to judge professional growth or competence of fellow teachers.

Teachers are reluctant to establish a definitive set of professional standards.

If teachers develop the standards unilaterally, the public will be critical and accuse them of self-seeking.

Boards of education now have some powers in this area and will be reluctant to release or share such power.

If locals do start developing standards, greater balance will develop in the range of teacher concerns in negotiations. The role that teachers, as association members, should gain must provide

real power and authority in decision making, not merely be advisory to school boards.

The professional development of teachers is a complex area for teacher locals to approach. Different facets of the problem involve the members, the school district, the community, the state, and the university. There is a place for both independent local association activities and cooperation with other agencies and groups.

One example of a cooperative effort is the implementation of a new school program. What should be the relationship of teachers, administrators, and school board members in deciding whether or how to initiate a new program? If the decision is made and the program is carried out solely by administrative directive—that is, if the teachers have only limited advisory powers—the program may be established over teachers' objections. If the teachers see serious flaws in the program, their only recourse may be to file grievances or other complaints. The local officers and staff will be caught between teachers with limited powers and administrators with substantial power. The result may be a continuing series of problems.

Collective bargaining thrusts the local association into a position where it influences the management decisions of the schools. The local can then go on to negotiate procedures that assure teachers real decision making. Some such procedures are—

The local selects the teachers who participate in district instructional and curriculum development committees.

Representatives of the local association are appointed through contract provisions.

Teachers have the majority of votes on these committees.

Committees have designated powers and funding agreed to through collectively bargained agreements.

The shifting of some power and authority from school boards and administrators, where they now rest, to teachers in newly developed roles causes one to look closely at what it means to have professionals controlling their profession and, concurrently, not having or wanting control of education. Within the bargained agreements, the school board still retains ultimate management authority over school funds and program. That is, the basic power to control education still rests with the public and their elected representatives. By taking part in procedures like those suggested above, teachers can both influence the process whereby school program decisions are made, and exert direct control over the professional development of members. They will also be able to separate administrative from program-managerial duties and roles. Administrators would still manage curriculum programs; however, they would do so within mutually developed policies.

State departments of education are now getting involved in the professional development of teachers. Statewide assessment programs are expanding, and state legislators continue to request hard data to show whether the quality of education is improving. Consequently, there will be more and more efforts to provide teachers with in-service and preservice programs geared to achieving statewide goals. State associations should provide locals with guidelines on how to cope with these situations; similarly, locals should systematically influence their state associations and departments of education.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 2: The local should gain a legal role in determining which prospective teachers have completed certification requirements.

Leaders' opinions: There are several objections to even seeking this goal. In most localities, neither the teachers nor the public are ready for the local to undertake this role. Acceptance might compromise the local's ability to serve as teacher advocate. It might involve the local in a conflict of interest. Harmful discrepancies might develop among the locals within a state. Finally, if the local does undertake this responsibility, the collective bargaining agent must establish an appeal procedure to protect member interest.

Nevertheless, there are reasons a local should take on this role:

Control over entry to the profession should be in the hands of practitioners.

The role should lead to greater accountability and create a perspective in the evaluation of prospective teachers that is shared among local association, administration, school board, and college or university.

Pressures by legislatures on the tenure process and insecurities created by the so-called "teacher oversupply" may force locals into this kind of activity.

The local may secure some influence over entry into the profession by urging that state associations or regional blocks of locals be designated the legal agents for determining certification. The influence may be exerted at both the preservice training levels and the actual certification approval levels. Through collective bargaining, locals can secure limits on the placement of new teachers in school districts. They can also establish limits by requiring specific training for supervising teachers and by limiting the availability of such teachers to universities.

The association's concern in improving the certification requirements for new teachers is two-fold. First, it is concerned with the quality of new teachers being prepared. Second, it is concerned with the number of new teachers being certified and placed in the employment lists.

An apparent teacher oversupply is an opportunity to raise standards for certification. This would improve the quality of new teachers; it would probably also limit the number of prospects completing certification. The association should also experiment with a variety of quantity control methods, such as—

Longer intern periods

Screening of prospective teachers for placement with supervising teachers

Association commitment to accept a given number of student teachers per 1,000 teachers and teacher refusal to accept any more than that.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 3: The local should participate in a system that evaluates teachers for retention of certification.

Leaders' opinions: In most states, certification is regulated by the state department of education. The nature of local association impact on the process is not clear at this time. Collective bargaining may have a growing influence on these state regulations. Locals will be influencing the decisions local administrators and school boards make about both local recommendations and the*

*In California, Kentucky, Minnesota, Oregon, and possibly other states, state-level commissions have been established to perform this function.

performance of functions prescribed by the state.

Locals should have some influence over state commissions' setting of criteria and standards for certification. The evaluation used in considering retention of certification should be separate from that used in considering the awarding of tenure. Tenure is the guaranteed right to continual employment following the demonstration of competence to do satisfactory work. Certification is the more basic right simply to be eligible for employment as a professional teacher. A teacher may be denied tenure if he or she performs unsatisfactorily in a particular employment situation. It would be presumptuous to think that certification also should be denied because of a loss of tenure. Prospects for successful performance may be good to excellent for a teacher who has been denied tenure when he or she is reemployed under different circumstances.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 4: The local should participate in setting standards of administrator performance.

Leaders' opinions: *Evaluation is only one of several ways of applying standards for administrator performance, but it is one that gives teachers something to say about the way schools are administered. The competence of teachers to evaluate administrators—like that of administrators to evaluate teachers—is, however, questionable. Valid standards and procedures must be developed for evaluation of both parties, teachers and administrators. Teacher participation in such standard-setting could help the schools to better achieve their goals.*

There are several ways a local can participate. For example:

Collective bargaining

Joint local teacher-administrator committees

Statewide administrative or legal guidelines controlling the evaluation of administrators.

Teacher evaluation of administrators might also contribute to:

Improved in-service education for administrators

A trend away from the military, or corporation, model of school operation.

School people vary widely in their opinions about teacher evaluation of administrators. The opinions run the full spectrum from absolutely no teacher involvement under any circumstances to complete and total teacher control of the employment, evaluation, and placement of every administrator. No one pattern seems acceptable to the majority of teachers at this time. Experiments are being conducted with such approaches as—

Teacher and building principal receiving similar evaluations and being considered peers in the employment process

Assignment of instructional responsibilities to the principal and of many of the business functions of the office to other individuals, making the principal a form of "master instructor" or "master teacher"

Teachers serving on administrator evaluation committees.

Educators should be encouraged to experiment with these and other possibilities.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 5: The local should participate in the identification of criteria for measuring the educational achievement of students.

Leaders' opinions: *Locals and other agencies and organizations should cooperate in identifying criteria. They should not rely too much on standardized testing experts from outside the local school system. Experts should be consulted*

and included in the development of programs; however, tests should not govern the establishment of goals and objectives. Rather, testing should be used to evaluate diagnosis, improvement of instruction, and achievement of the desired goals.

Because local school districts are responsible for developing criteria, they should pay teachers for their work on such criteria.

Generally, leaders seemed to think that the association should influence others (primarily local school boards) regarding the criteria for measuring student performance.

The emphasis here is on cooperation among the concerned parties: public (including parents, school boards, legislatures, and others), students, and teachers. The development and implementation of student assessment criteria are *not* the sole prerogative of any one group or interest. The schools are public schools, and the criteria should be developed to best help students learn what they need to know in order to function within society.

The role of teacher organizations seems to be to provide collective teacher opinion to influence collective public opinion on these issues at the community, state, and national levels of criteria development. The local association may, and often does, have a great deal to say about such evaluation practices as grades, report cards, standardized tests, and assessment tests.

One aspect of evaluation that needs immediate attention is the dearth of meaningful collective student opinion regarding student achievement ratings. A sound and adequate means must be developed for gathering ideas from students at all levels where they are evaluated, early elementary through adult. It may well be that one of the most serious flaws in the current educational practice of American schools is the arbitrary and in many instances capricious manner in which students are graded and sorted.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 6: The local should establish a means for teacher determination of instructional leaders in schools.

Leaders' opinions: *Local associations need to take a new look at traditional teacher-administrator roles and job descriptions. They should experiment with a variety of methods:*

Teacher election of fellow professionals to principalships

Teacher selection and/or evaluation of administrators

Employment of teacher-principals and transfer of much of the school's business-related activity to administrators employed to handle it.

The leaders did not present a consensus on how an association might carry out this priority. They did mention, however, that some forms of open education programs (such as differentiated staffing or the open classroom) currently call for new assignments of duty and responsibility, and a change of relationship between teacher and administrator. If the local adopts such a priority, teachers would have different responsibilities for instructional decision making. The leaders also considered teacher activity at both the building and the district levels important to the effectiveness of local association influence on the school system leadership. A further benefit to teachers might be the elimination of administrator paternalism towards decisions about the curriculum and instruction programs.

As teachers secure more responsibility for choosing instructional leaders, they will need to—

Devise an objective method of selection

Reverse the current trend among educators to use leadership positions of this type to gain

administrative promotion and abandon direct responsibility for instruction
Find an appropriate evaluation method.

LONG-RANGE PRIORITY 7: The local should establish cooperative professional development programs with universities.

Leaders' opinions: *Such programs should be cooperatively planned by locals, school districts, and universities. Neither locals nor school boards should develop the programs alone. Some locals have already established cooperative programs with universities and state associations; NEA should compile a list of typical programs from which locals could adapt a plan appropriate for their situation.*

Local leaders developing plans may have trouble:

Retaining local association identity
Avoiding parochial tendencies in planning and implementation
Maintaining cooperation among local, state, and NEA levels
Establishing defined authority roles for teachers.

Some locals may view this activity as good and needed, but yet of low priority at this time. Many K-12 association leaders consider university programs irrelevant, a waste of time, or even threatening.

Other locals have involved themselves in extensive and meaningful contact with universities and colleges. Examples of these programs may be found now in San Diego, California, and Montgomery County, Maryland.

SUMMARY

These six immediate and seven long-range priorities for locals offer ideas for direction and a better notion of how complex a task association activity in instruction and professional development programs will be. But before getting under way, a local needs to determine its own unique priorities. How? Here is a brief summary of one way to establish priorities. It is offered as a guideline for local leaders who want to develop and implement a program, and who desire to select out alternatives from a set of opportunities where each has high merit.

A. Preliminary steps

1. Establish definitions within your local.

The following definitions may serve as beginning points:

Instructional improvement—Any effort or process by which a teacher promotes or enhances the quality of teaching and learning.

Professional development—The process of improving, or strengthening, a teacher's educational skills and conceptual understandings.

2. Establish a structure for identifying what "should be."

The structure may be a governing body or appointed committee, an elected officer or employed staff; however, fix the responsibility and authority.

To consider what "should be" will prove to be insufficient if that becomes the end point of the process. Taking part in this process should lead one to consider the reasonableness of given alternatives, or the feasibility of particular goals.

In identifying the needs* of your local you may find a form of the Delphi research technique helpful. A brief outline of the Delphi process appears in Appendix A.

B. Action steps

1. Make a choice. Choose specific goals to be achieved.

In making a choice do *not* focus on parochial or limited alternatives; rather, provide the flexibility to explore and move as decisions are made.

2. Design a strategy to achieve your choice(s).

In developing your project, consider such needs as leadership, costs, time, materials, barriers, and risks.

3. Keep an eye to the future.

Anticipate changes in school funding, legislation, teacher education, and community needs.

Professional development and instructional change are slow-moving processes; however, if you choose high quality directions and sound alternatives, the result will be good for both educators and education.

Ideas may at first be very general; they can be made more and more specific as appropriate information is brought to the designing of programs and strategy. As plans are discussed and developed in terms of the interests and needs of members, they will be refined and revised. During this process, further choices and decisions become necessary.

Generally, members will find they will be making decisions on—

The teacher's role in decision making
In-service education
Teacher education
Curriculum development
Certification and licensure
Professional standards.

Therefore—

Decide what your local should be doing in instruction and professional development
Determine how your local can accomplish carefully selected goals.

*See the NEA Needs Assessment Program, Instruction and Professional Development Office, NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

State and national roles. Teacher leaders responding to questions on future association activity felt locals should influence—but the state association should actually make—the decisions on these issues:

Certification and licensure
Large-scale curriculum development
Program goal setting
Impact on teacher education institutions
Structure and reorganization of governance
Development of criteria and guidelines for evaluating the performance of teachers, administrators, and students
State-level political action concerns.

The leaders also said the NEA should be providing cooperative association staff training for the purpose of expanding the instruction and professional development interests of the organization. The NEA should be developing and influencing experimental modes of teacher preservice education, in-service education, and professional development.

CHECKLIST

Here are some specific ideas for starting to discover what teachers in your local want to do about instructional improvement and professional development. It may be best to develop your own instrument or device for establishing local need and desire. However, the suggestions that follow may help; they should be adapted as they fit the uniqueness of the local situation.

Check to see whether your local is active in all of the following areas. The seven points on the first checklist are basic factors in programs of change. You may find it useful, too, to apply this evaluation to each of the short- and long-range priorities cited in this pamphlet.

Change Factor	Evaluation Scale		
	Yes or no	If yes, to what extent	Alternatives for action
1. The local has initiated and appointed a group to study and recommend changes in goals and objectives for involving members in instructional decision making.			
2. Formal and established structures exist within the local to direct and organize efforts in professional development.			
3. The local is encouraging experimentation with new activities in teaching and instruction.			
4. The local has a program that assists the school district in evaluation of the impact of current school instruction on students.			
5. The local has a means for involving members in selecting and/or designing appropriate instructional content, materials, methods, and teaching aids for use by teachers.			

Change Factor	Evaluation Scale		
	Yes or no	If yes, to what extent	Alternatives for action
6. The local has a means for disseminating instructional improvement information through the membership and the community.			
7. Local members and staff have clearly defined authority and responsibility to implement instructional change programs.			
Short-range priority			
1. The local participates with the local school board in curriculum and instruction decisions.			
2. The local uses political action to establish a legal and financial base for instructional improvement.			
3. The local legally shares in policy decisions that establish conditions under which teachers, teacher aides, student teachers, and other instructional personnel are placed in schools.			
4. The local has implemented positive action programs ensuring fair treatment of racial and ethnic minorities.			

Change Factor	Evaluation Scale		
	Yes or no	If yes, to what extent	Alternatives for action
5. The local cooperatively initiates and plans in-service education programs in professional development of members.			
6. The local programs and budgets a portion of fiscal and human resources to projects on instructional improvement.			

Appendix A

An Outline of One Form of Modified Delphi Technique That May Be Used for the Gathering of Opinions.*

Delphi is a process designed to obtain a controlled set of informational feedback from a small group of selected experts regarding a specifically defined topic. Opinionnaires are systematically used to gather data, which are analyzed, summarized, and possibly used for further purposes.

Delphi places emphasis on the "intuitive" judgment of experts. Such judgment is an expertise that grows from personal experience and knowledge of possible events in a specialized area. The process provides an opportunity for gathering information that may assist decision-makers as they plan a future for an institution. Delphi responses are characterized by anonymity, controlled feedback, and statistical group-response data.

If you want to find out more about Delphi and how to use it, consult some of the several selected references cited in the bibliography to this booklet.

*The Delphi process was used by the author in a doctoral thesis at Michigan State University, *The Role of Teacher Organizations in Professional Development and Instructional Improvement as Perceived by Selected Teacher Organization Leaders*, 1973.

Appendix B

Priority Rankings of Teacher Organization Roles

The priority rankings of teacher organization roles which follow were those explored in the study reported in this pamphlet. Numbers in the first column indicate the priority rank. The second column lists role statements explored. (Role statements speak to all levels of teacher organization activities, not solely to local association programs.) The priority score was determined by placing responses to a role's "desirability" and "potential impact" on a number scale and adding scores obtained from respondents' opinions. Scores with the highest desirability and the highest potential impact combined to obtain the highest priority ranking.

The column indicating date of acceptance was established by determining the median dates selected by study participants.

Priority Ranking of Teacher Organization Role Statements

Priority Rank	Role Statement	Priority Score	Date of Acceptance
1	Local teacher organizations should participate with school boards in policy decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.	146	1973-75
2	State teacher organizations should, within state legislative guidelines and administrative regulations, participate in the licensing and certification of teachers.	145	1976-82
3	Local, state, and national teacher organizations should use political power to establish legal and financial foundations for instructional improvement programs.	142	1973-75
4	Local teacher organizations should legally share in decisions on policy and conditions under which student teachers, teachers, teacher aides, and other instructional personnel will be placed in schools.	141	1973-75
5	Local teacher organizations should assume an active role in assuring fair treatment of ethnic and racial minorities in all phases of education.	132	1973-75
6	Local teacher organizations should initiate and plan in-service programs in professional development for and with members.	127	1973-75
7	State-level teacher organizations should participate in setting standards, procedures, and policies of teacher education institutions.	126	1976-82
	National-level teacher organizations should participate cooperatively with local and		

Priority Ranking of Teacher Organization Role Statements

Priority Rank	Role Statement	Priority Score	Date of Acceptance
8	state levels in providing professional organization staff with training in understanding and developing local teacher organization roles in professional development of members.	124	1973-75
9	State teacher organizations should, within legal guidelines and regulations, share with teacher education institutions in determination of goals for teacher preparation.	122	1976-82
10	State and national teacher organizations should plan and encourage alternatives to current educational practice (new school formats and curricula).	121	1973-75
11	Local teacher organizations should share with school boards in determining conditions under which teachers and students interact.	120	1973-75
12	Local teacher organizations should seek to establish roles for members in determining local professional development programs.	118	1973-75
13	Local teacher organizations should systematically plan to establish policies and procedures on professional development programs for members.	116	1976-82
14	Teacher organizations should serve as resource aides and supportive spokesmen to students and parents on issues of common interest and agreement in the area of instruction.	110	1973-75

Priority Ranking of Teacher Organization Role Statements

Priority Rank	Role Statement	Priority Score	Date of Acceptance
15	Local and state-level teacher organizations should legally share in determining which prospective teachers have completed certification requirements.	101	1976-82
15	Local teacher organizations should participate in establishing a system to evaluate and reevaluate teachers for retention of certification.	101	1976-82
15	National-level teacher organizations should develop and implement programs encouraging educational experimentation in the professional development of teachers.	101	1973-75
16	Local teacher organizations should program and budget an appropriate portion of fiscal and human resources to projects on instructional improvement.	94	1973-75
17	State and local teacher organizations should participate in setting standards of administrator performance.	89	1976-82
18	Teacher organizations should employ a staff of instructional improvement specialists which should function in training staff and teachers on policies, procedures, and specific programs of instruction.	88	1976-82
19	Local teacher organizations should identify criteria by which educational achievement of students may be measured.	73	1976-82
20	Local teacher organizations should establish a means for teacher identification and/or determination of instructional leaders in a school district.	72	1976-82

Priority Ranking of Teacher Organization Role Statements

Priority Rank	Role Statement	Priority Score	Date of Acceptance
20	State-level teacher organizations should maintain an extensive clearinghouse role for disseminating instructional information.	72	1973-75
21	Local teacher organizations should establish cooperative professional development programs with universities and colleges.	69	1976-82
22	National-level teacher organizations should establish teacher renewal (in-service) centers.	61	1976-82
22	Teacher organizations should assist in establishing new forms of local boards.	61	1976-82
23	Teacher organizations should employ a staff of instruction improvement specialists.	60	1976-82
24	State teacher organizations should develop and enforce a professional standard of teacher performance.	47	1976-82
25	National teacher organizations should provide career credential to professional educators.	1	1983-92

Appendix C

United Teaching Profession Teacher Needs Assessment Program

The National Education Association, in concert with selected state education associations, has developed a Teacher Needs Assessment Program which is being tested and refined this year, 1973-74. The program is designed to help local associations determine teacher needs in instruction and professional development and make decisions about action programs on teacher needs.

The program includes polling the perceptions of all members in a local on a comprehensive list of items that deal with instruction and professional development. Teachers are asked to check "what is" and "what should be" (1) never or almost never, (2) sometimes, (3) frequently, (4) always or nearly always, on items such as:

	What is				What should be			
1. There is sufficient staff in this school to meet the needs of students.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2. Teachers have to assume duties that other kinds of employees could do.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3. The climate in this school is oppressive.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
4. I am frustrated by the inflexibility and routine of this school.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5. Teachers are collectively involved in decision-making in this school.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6. To survive in this school teachers must watch out for their own interests.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
7. The administrators of this school provide instructional leadership.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8. The school board accepts ultimate responsibility for the welfare of students.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
9. I vary my expectations of students to meet individual needs.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
10. My students help determine learning objectives.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

The tabulation of 99 such items with analysis of the discrepancy between "what is" and "what should be" provides a local association with a list of the items which teachers say are furthest from what they perceive is desirable.

These data provide the information necessary for a local association to check, analyze, and interpret local conditions in instruction and professional development. They make available a data base which locals can further prioritize to focus on the most crucial concerns of members. When the most crucial concerns have been identified and action steps to alleviate concerns have been determined and accepted by members, the local can take initiative through negotiations and other approaches to action. The program requires extensive teacher involvement, and probably a special committee, to move from information to action.

Additional information on this program is available from state associations or the Instruction and Professional Development Office at NEA.

Appendix D

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